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REMARKS**I. Introduction**

Claims 1-25 are pending in the above application.

Claims 1-6, 10, 12, 17-21 and 25-26 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102.

Claims 7-9, 11, 13-16 and 22-24 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103.

Claims 1, 15 and 17 are independent claims.

III. Prior Art Rejections

A. Claims 1-6, 10, 12, 17-21 and 25-26 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by McKinnon III et al. (2001/0039582).

Obviousness can only be established by combining or modifying the teachings of the prior art to produce the claimed invention where there is some teaching, suggestion, or motivation to do so found either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art. *Ecolochem Inc. v. Southern California Edison Co.*, 227 F.3d 1361, 56 U.S.P.Q.2d (BNA) 1065 (Fed. Cir. 2000); *In re Dembiczak*, 175 F.3d 994, 999, 50 U.S.P.Q.2D (BNA) 1614, 1617 (Fed. Cir. 1999); *In re Jones*, 958 F.2d 347, 21 U.S.P.Q.2d 1941 (Fed. Cir. 1992); and *In re Fine*, 837 F.2d 1071, 5 U.S.P.Q.2d 1596 (Fed. Cir. 1988). See also MPEP 2143.01.

McKinnon III does not disclose or suggest a data switching system in communication with a plurality of network elements, said data switching system being adapted to issue ranging requests to said network elements from time to time, determine transmission time delays associated with each of said network elements based on responses to the ranging requests, and to store responses to the ranging requests in a database; and a management system for managing network elements on the cable network, said management system being adapted to obtain

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network element status information from said database, wherein status information indicating a status of said network elements is determined based on the responses by a network element to the ranging request, as recited by amended claim 1. McKinnon III also does not disclose providing a ranging request signal from the data switching system to each of the network elements of the plurality of network elements; determining status information for each of the plurality of network elements based on a response from each of the plurality of network elements to the ranging request signal, respectively, as recited by amended claim 17.

McKinnon III discloses to issue queries from a data collector 88 contained in network access manager 86 to the CMTS and CM to monitor the network access. Figs. 5 and 6; para. 65. McKinnon III specifically discloses to issue a separate query signal to monitor the network access and does not disclose to rely on results of ranging request signals from the CMTS to the network elements.

McKinnon III also does not disclose providing a ranging request signal from the data switching system to each of the network elements of the plurality of network elements, as required by amended claims 1, 15 and 17. McKinnon III simply issues queries to the CMs to which counter values of logical data units (LDUs) are provided, where LDU are clearly described as "the number of bytes and the number of data packets that are transmitted." Para. 65. The ranging request in claims 1, 15 and 17 is also used to determine transmission time delays associated with each of the network elements, in addition to determining the status of the elements. The specific purpose queries issued in McKinnon, clearly do not satisfy the ranging request limitations of amended claims 1, 15 or 17.

To the extent that the Office action equates the queries from data collector 88 of McKinnon, III, to a ranging request, McKinnon explains that such queries are intended to determine the "network access usage" and are sent "to the CMTS and CMs" (para. 65, ln. 4) and that such queries are sent out at 5 and 30 minute intervals for the CMTS and CM, respectively, to "minimize consumption of bandwidth across the Cable Network that otherwise would be allocated to users" (para. 67). Whereas a ranging request is a necessary communication that constantly occurs between the CMTS and the CMs to determine characteristics of the communications (such as transmission delays) associated with particular CMs and the CMTS so that the CMTS can provide a usable communication to the CM and visa versa, e.g. the CMTS and CM may adjust transmission/receiver characteristics such as the channel frequency,

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transmission power and bit rate to a CM to maintain the communication channel. One of skill in the art would not consider a communication with an interval of up to 30 minutes to be a ranging request, which are more likely to occur every 30 seconds. In short, McKinnon, III clearly generates a special purpose polling signal, whereas the claims rely on an existing network signal.

Accordingly, McKinnon does not disclose each and every limitation of claims 1 or 17 and does not render claims 1 or 17 unpatentable. Likewise, McKinnon III does not render claims 2-6, 10 or 12 which depend on amended claim 1, nor claims 18-21 and 25 which depend on amended claim 17 unpatentable.

B. Claims 7, 9, 11, 15 and 22 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over McKinnon III in view of Hsieh (U.S. Pat. No. 6,512,824).

Obviousness can only be established by combining or modifying the teachings of the prior art to produce the claimed invention where there is some teaching, suggestion, or motivation to do so found either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art. *Ecolchem Inc. v. Southern California Edison Co.*, 227 F.3d 1361, 56 U.S.P.Q.2d (BNA) 1065 (Fed. Cir. 2000); *In re Dembiczak*, 175 F.3d 994, 999, 50 U.S.P.Q.2D (BNA) 1614, 1617 (Fed. Cir. 1999); *In re Jones*, 958 F.2d 347, 21 U.S.P.Q.2d 1941 (Fed. Cir. 1992); and *In re Fine*, 837 F.2d 1071, 5 U.S.P.Q.2d 1596 (Fed. Cir. 1988). See also MPEP 2143.01.

Neither McKinnon nor Hsieh, taken alone or in combination, disclose or suggest all of the limitations of amended claim 1, upon which claims 7, 9 and 11 depend, nor the limitations of amended claim 15, nor the limitations of amended claim 17, upon which claim 22 depends. McKinnon does not disclose such as discussed above. Hsieh discloses a proxy database for an element management system of a telephone switching network. Hsieh also does not disclose the features of amended claims 1, 15 and 17, and the Office action does not rely on Hsieh as disclosing such features.

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Accordingly, as neither McKinnon nor Hsieh, taken alone or in combination, disclose or suggest all of the limitations of amended claim 1, upon which claims 7, 9 and 11 depend, nor the limitations of amended claim 15, nor the limitations of amended claim 17, upon which claim 22 depends, the combination of McKinnon and Hsieh does not render these claims unpatentable.

C. Claims 8, 14, 16 and 23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over McKinnon III in view of Carlson et al. (U.S. Pub. No. 2004/0210632).¹

Neither McKinnon nor Hsieh, taken alone or in combination, disclose or suggest all of the limitations of amended claim 1, upon which claims 8 and 14 depend, nor the limitations of amended claim 15 upon which claim 16 depends, nor the limitations of amended claim 17, upon which claim 23 depends. McKinnon does not disclose such as discussed above. Carlson discloses a distributed network management system with a hub server and remote servers. Abs. Carlson also does not disclose the features of amended claims 1, 15 and 17, and the Office action does not rely on Carlson as disclosing such features.

Accordingly, as neither McKinnon nor Carlson, taken alone or in combination, disclose or suggest all of the limitations of amended claim 1, upon which claims 8 and 14 depend, nor the limitations of amended claim 15 upon which claim 16 depends, nor the limitations of amended claim 17, upon which claim 23 depends, the combination of McKinnon and Carlson does not render these claims unpatentable.

D. Claims 13 and 24 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over McKinnon III in view of Applicant's Alleged Admitted Prior Art (APA).

¹ Applicant notes that claim 16 depends on independent claim 15 and incorporates all of the limitations thereof. However, while the Office action relied on Hsieh to reject claim 15, Hsieh was not relied upon to reject claim 16. Accordingly, the rejection of claim 16 appears to be structurally defective.

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Neither McKinnon nor APA, taken alone or in combination, disclose or suggest all of the limitations of amended claim 1, upon which claim 13 depends, nor the limitations of amended claim 17, upon which claim 24 depends. McKinnon does not disclose such as discussed above. APA is relied on as allegedly disclosing that DOCSIS requirements specify an RF Management Information Base (MIB). APA also does not disclose the features of amended claims 1 and 17, and the Office action does not rely on APA as disclosing such features.

Accordingly, as neither McKinnon nor APA, taken alone or in combination, disclose or suggest all of the limitations of amended claim 1, upon which claim 13 depends, nor the limitations of amended claim 17, upon which claim 24 depends, the combination of McKinnon and APA does not render these claims unpatentable.


IV. Conclusion

Having fully responded to the Office action, the application is believed to be in condition for allowance. Should any issues arise that prevent early allowance of the above application, the examiner is invited contact the undersigned to resolve such issues.

To the extent an extension of time is needed for consideration of this response, Applicant hereby request such extension and, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge deposit account number 502117 for any fees associated therewith.

Date: 5/18/26

Respectfully submitted,

By: 
Lawrence T. Cullen
Reg. No.: 44,489

Motorola Connected Home Solutions
101 Tournament Drive
Horsham, PA 19044
(215) 323-1797